

## THE CANCER OF THE ROSE

Sancho, my horse shining!  
There are miles to run and worlds  
To win, if by cliché;  
I cannot wonder wasted thoughts  
of heaven's quiet places  
But must accelerate forever.

My bowels burn for action.  
You know it, Sancho?  
Comprenez-vous the thrill of nights  
Barking at the stars falling flaming  
Through the moon? My horse with wheels  
And coat rubbed down with simonize.

What this world needs  
is a good five-cent  
prophylactic  
or maybe cheaper  
with distribution  
and guarantees  
that manufacturers  
would rectify  
all errors  
and accidents  
with illustrated  
instructions.

They all said, "Art —  
what men live by and for."  
They all resolved, in places  
Where smoke had routed oxygen,  
That we would stand together,  
Tomorrow's avant-garde today.  
And we talked long hours in gardens  
Over glasses half-empty, but it rained.  
(rain, rain, go away,  
little poets want to play,)  
"It always rains," they said  
And went inside.



A few good-naturedly shook fists  
At clouds and said, "We aren't  
discouraged; we'll build our altar  
higher than the clouds," and I  
Was one of those, brick by brick.  
(The clouds looked down and laughed  
at tiny efforts and filled buckets.)

Sancho, my manuscripts!  
Bring out the inkdream's rape  
of virgin paper traversing  
Sex and Christ without a preference.  
(What this world needs is a good five-cent  
Christ-symbol  
for all of those  
whose hearts bleed  
boric acid  
at the valves.)

We will pray for the carcass,  
Offer wreaths, and burn our plague victim  
Before others are contaminated.  
A match, Sancho: we cannot fight our windmills,  
But we can burn them,  
Laughing raucously at their astonished fall.  
What this world needs is good five-cent

men  
outside of fiction  
and dreams,  
and you can ask too much —

Live your art, skeleton;  
Shore up your bones against the winds,  
Nailing your bones as weight against the winds.  
The rain will wash it all away,  
The rain will wash it all away.

*Harold Grutzmacher*